

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PARIS 00316 041828Z

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ARA-16 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00

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R 041755Z JAN 74

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5864

AMCONSUL BORDEAUX

AMCONSUL LYON

AMCONSUL MARSEILLE

AMCONSUL MARTINIQUE

AMCONSUL NICE

AMCONSUL STRASBOURG

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PGOV, FR

SUBJECT: PRESIDENT POMPIDOU'S NEW YEAR'S MESSAGES: FIRMNESS AND
UNITY

REF: PARIS' 012 AND 0213

1. PRESIDENT POMPIDOU COMPLETED ON JANUARY 3 THE TRADITIONAL
PRESIDENTIAL NEW YEAR'S MESSAGES: TO THE NATION ON RADIO AND
TELEVISION (PARIS 33097) TO THE NATIONAL ADMINISTRATION, THE
PRESSCORPS (PARIS 0186) AND THE DIPLOMATIC CORPS. WE HAVE REPORTED
SEPARATELY THOSE ASPECTS OF THE MESSAGES WHICH TOUCHED ON
SPECIFIC POLICY ISSUES (PARIS 0212 AND 0213) WHILE MOST
OF THE MESSAGES WERE SHORT ON SUBSTANCE, THEY WERE CLOSELY
EXAMINED IN FRENCH POLITICAL CIRCLES FOR CLUES ABOUT POMPIDOU'S
HEALTH AND ATTITUDES. IT SEEMS TO US THAT POMPIDOU DELIBERATELY
USED THE SERIES OF GREETINGS IN AN ATTEMPT TO ALLAY THE RECENT
CRITICISMS ABOUT THE EFFECTS OF HIS HEALTH ON HIS
GOVERNING OF FRANCE. IN ALL THE MESSAGES, POMPIDOU CAME ACROSS
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AS ALERT AND CONFIDENT, CONCERNED OVER FRANCE'S PROBLEMS AND PRE-

PARED TO TAKE DECISIONS TO DEAL WITH THEM. HE DREW A MODERATELY SOMBER PORTRAIT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL PROBLEMS WHICH FRANCE FACES. HE APPEALED TO THE NATION FOR UNITY AND COOPERATION TO HELP SOLVE THEM. HE EXPRESSED HIS READINESS AND WILLINGNESS TO LEAD THE COUNTRY AND TO TAKE WHATEVER DIFFICULT DECISIONS MIGHT BECOME NECESSARY. HE SEEMED DELIBERATEY TO BE TRYING TO COUNTER CHARGES OF DRIVE AND OF GOVERNMENTAL LETHARGY. HE REAFFIRMED HIS CONFIDENCE IN PRIME MINISTER MESSMER AND HIS GOVERNMENT.

2. POMPIDOU'S WORDS AND STILL LESS HIS PHYSICAL APPEARANCE WILL NOT OF THEMSELVES ALLAY THE CONCERNs WHICH HAVE BEEN EXPRESSED OVER INACTION OF THE GOF. IT IS TOO EARLY TO TELL WHETHER HE AND HIS GOVERNMENT ARE INDEED PREPARED TO TAKE THE HARD DECISIONS NECESSARY TO SOLVE FRANCE'S DIFFICULTIES. NEVERTHELESS, POMPIDOU WAS SUCCESSFUL IN PROJECTING TO THE AVERAGE FRENCHMAN THE IMAGE OF SOMEONE IN COMMAND OF HIMSELF AND OF THE SITUATION. HIS APPEAL FOR UNITY OF THE NATION BEHIND THE GOVERNMENT WILL PROBABLY STRIKE A RESPONSIVE CHORD AMONG THE FRENCH WHO ARE CONCERNED OVER DEVELOPMENTS: ECONOMIC, POLITICAL AND SOCIAL IN FRANCE AND IN THE WORLD. POMPIDOU'S SKILLFUL PERFORMANCE IN HIS NEW YEAR'S GREETINGS WILL EARN HIM A TEMPORARY RESPITE IN THE PERSONAL CRITICISM, AT LEAST FROM THE MAJORITY PARTIES AND FROM MUCH OF THE PRESS.

STONE

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